772 Then all things assembled and began to rumble in order to complete the creation of the universe. The glã remained within themselves and delegated to zo the responsibility of liberating the designated and animated objects which they contained and of which they had created the essence. Zo took possession of them and joined their elements into a huge ball, kuru, called yo yebali, "invisible yo": zo gave yo the principle of the seed and endowed it with attraction and power (1).

1. zo ye kise masa di yo ma, ka samani masa bla la, ka mineni masa bla a la.

Yo was the spirit, more exactly "the thought and action," that was to work out the creation, using the "signed objects" determined by glã.

772 532 /5/ The glã glã zo is represented by three engravings on wood. The first, glã kele, represents the two glã in the shape of two spirals in opposite directions and with connected points of origin; below this is engraved "the object with four arms" from which issued the signs (2). These signs, 226 in number, are barely sketched out, showing

[124] 2. Today this object is represented by a twig of Acacia albida, called "the wood that separates the signs," ti kla dyiri. Its bark is removed in such a way as to outline the multiplication sign enclosed in an oval representing the world.

that "the creation of glã takes place in the invisible, the unknown, the unrealized." The second, glã dya, is composed of 226 horizontal or vertical lines, the counterparts or "witnesses" of words. The third, glã zo, is an oval divided into seven compartments (a square in the middle and two times three lateral sections) in which the symbolic representations are clearly engraved. In the middle of the central square, there is an oval containing six signs which represent simultaneously "the egg of the world and yo, the creating voice."

772 2. The yo

The creation of the perceptible universe beginning with yo is conceived of as a progression in "thinking," tasi (3). This progression,

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a) The Acacia albida called kokuruni (Banankoroni).

Plate I

b) In the foreground, baskets of spiralled straw called yugu (Ségou market).

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c) Drawing representing Faro (Sama).

782 /91/ Actually the altars from the region of Ségou originate mostly
778 in Toko, a settlement situated to the south of the town where the king's
326 blacksmiths lived. The ancestor of these blacksmiths is buried in the rocks which border Toko and from which the stones used as altar are

Fig. 5. —Stone altar, fara ba, of Banankoroni, consecrated to ancestors. It is stuck into the ground above the skull and bones of an albino, hoes, and a circumcision knife. The ritual drawing traced during the ceremonies of the renewal of the year represents the torches and the whips of the Kworè, 3 men and 4 women, which recall the number 7, image of the creation (Informant's drawing).

[532 769]

carved. If a village chief wants to obtain one he sends a delegate to Toko. This emissary receives from the blacksmith the stone appropriate to the function of the altar and the quality of the person

773 829 "They were covered with shaggy body hair, beard and hair; their long nails resembled claws; their teeth resembled fangs. They knew no language and had no clothing to protect themselves from bad weather; they lived in holes dug in the /99/ ground or in habitable natural caves, at the bottom of which they slept and kept their prey. To defend themselves against wild animals, they placed wooden spikes and pointed rocks at the entrance of these quarters. These deep holes communicated with each other and together formed regular underground villages" (Fig. 6) (1).

[332]

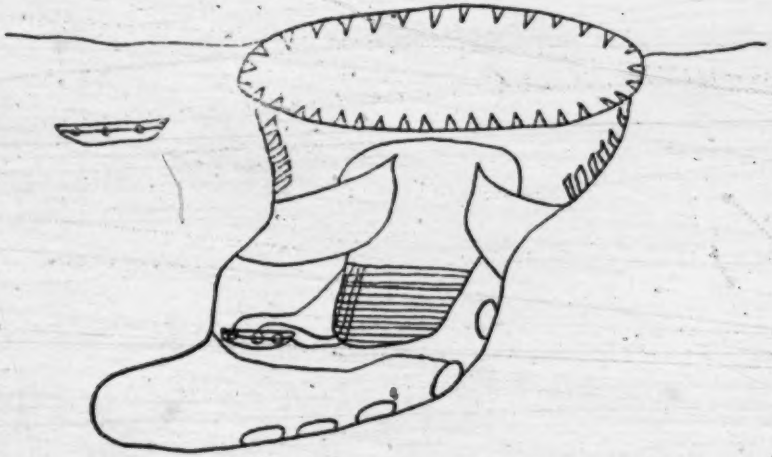

Fig. 6 —Underground home of primitive men. The entrance is guarded by pointed rocks. In the center, the drawing of the first loom invented by men. At the left, the shuttle (see p. 181). (Drawing by an informant.)

[172]

1. Some of these excavations in the neighborhood of Ségou, which may still be visited today, are venerated by the Bambara as ancestral homes.

Since they did not know language these men communicated by means of head gestures, movements of the feet and hands, and grunts. When a difference arose between them, before using their hands they drew back their lips and measured their long canines to determine who the winner would be. "Later they were given language, but

773 226 "Despite their tears, the spirit gave the nets to three men who were present and repeated his teaching. The women left the water's edge while the men turned their new knowledge to account. But at the end of a few days the women became hungry; they went to ask for fish which for seven days was denied them. They then united with the fishermen and the Bozo people were the issue of these first marriages."

At first, fishing was reserved for the Bozo people alone and it was only later that the Bambara learned from the Bozo how to make and manage the fishing nets as well as how to carry out the numerous rites centered around them.

773 226 411 The Bambara practiced hunting and gathering before becoming farmers. It is interesting to compare the fishing net with the sling (ndõfere) now mostly used by children. One of its models (Fig. 7) is

[532]

Fig. 7 — Sling (ndõfere) of the ancient Bambara (Drawing by an informant).

described as having been the most ancient of their weapons of the hunt and war. The central portion of this sling which in reality had the shape of a net /102/ (dyoba, literally, big net) woven from nyama fibers and similar to the one used by fishermen, was drawn out into two thongs. The right one (kinintegere, literally, tegere of the right) ended in a sort of a bouquet of wooden lamellae (tegere), making it easier to hold. The left one (missema, literally, little thing) or numan (literally, left) was free. The man would hold the weapon by both ends, putting stones in the net and "blowing on the right thong to give breath" to the sling. Placing his left foot forward, would twirl it rapidly and let go the left thong, thus releasing the projectiles.

291 which they got rid of by means of this dye. A live swallow was im-
773 mersed in the liquid, which was obtained by soaking the leaves and to
386 which was mixed ground charcoal, and later was released, thus conse-
crating the dye into which the loincloth was soaked.

291 The next garment was made of two strips, dyo kama (literally,
773, shoulder nets), which were hooked on to each arm. The strip on the right arm, representing male, was attached by three thin straps (male number). The other was attached by four straps, four and left being female. The wearer would lie down over the strip on the right side

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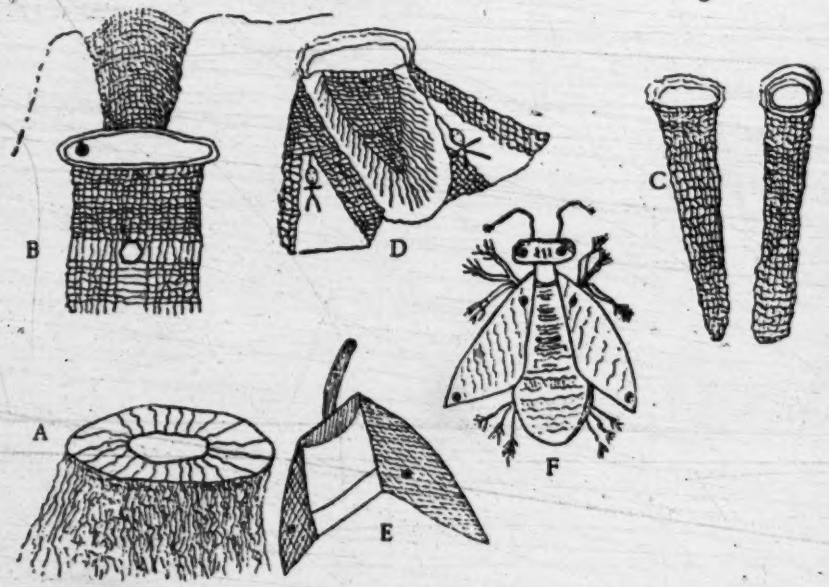

[787]

Fig. 8 —Ancient Clothing of the Bambara.
(A) The skirt of nyama fibers; (B) the loincloth; (C) the "shoulder nets"; (D) the tunic; (E) the bonnet are made of dyed and woven cotton threads. (F) the dung beetle, an insect which plays a part in geomancy. (Drawing by an informant).

and would cover himself with that on the left (Fig. 8, C).

Next, men made a kind of short tunic, wolo kama (literally, partridge wings), which was dyed red (Fig. 8, D). At the top of the openings where the arms passed were suspended /107/ two little figures (mani) carved out of wood. These represented the souls of the wearer, "took their life from the veins, and gave their strength to the

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2. The Blacks consider that the discovery of iron and metallurgy are due to the Gwonna. It is, however, not impossible that this technology was imported by craftsmen who came from the Mediterranean.

At a time when the men had left the village of Gwondougou, taking their altars with them, two girls left their home and went to live with two artisans of the Fané and Koumaré families.

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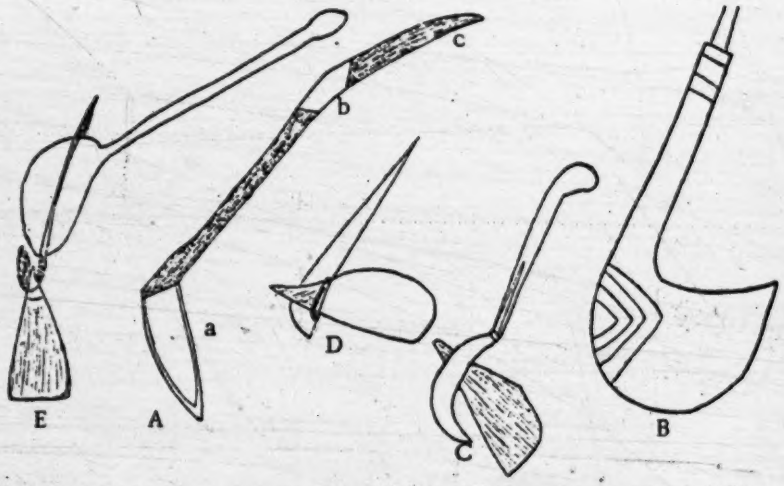

Fig. 9 —Weapons and tools of wood (A and B), of stone (C and D), of iron (E) of the ancient Bambara. (Drawing by an informant).

When the men returned to the village to get some hard stone which they would like to use, they were very much troubled not to find their girls. They dug the ground to search for them, thinking that they had been buried, since men in those days lived in laid-out underground holes. In the course of this work they discovered some rocks which were hitherto unknown to them and which are called farabele. The men thought these rocks beautiful and wished to use them. When placed in fire they were changed and became so hard /118/ that the hammers with which the men attempted to shape them split. The pieces of iron were then used as projectiles to replace the stones of the slings. But the blacksmiths, who had abducted the young girls and who had returned to the village with their wives, saw the new substance and suggested the idea of making axes out of it.

whether he is head of a family, head of a religious society, or a bachelor.

These objects are hung from the ceiling or hidden away in corners from the looks of people and the risks of impurity. The walls of the room, daubed up to a third of their height /130/ with black earth,

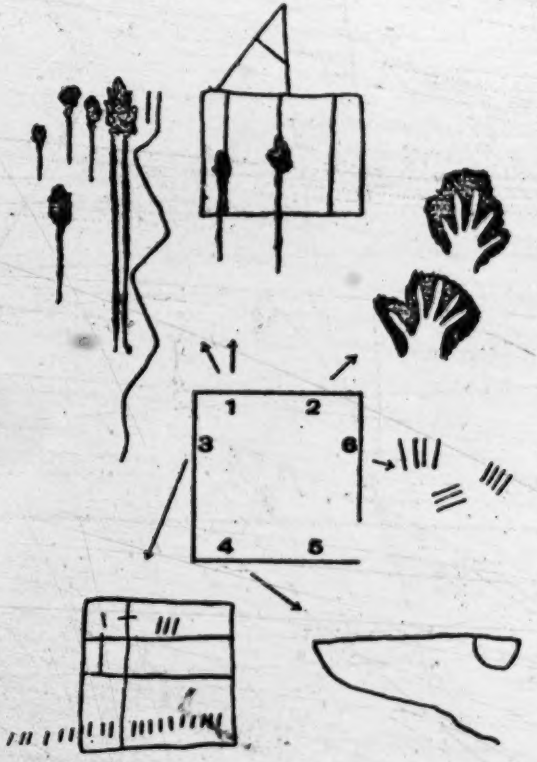

Fig. 10 — Diagram of the česo of Tètè, important citizen of Banankoroni and reproduction of the drawings on the walls: 1. The ancestors and their home. 2. The hands of the living. 3. The sky, space, the earth, and the 22 categories. 4. The Komo's whip. 5. A red stain. 6. The owner (three) and his two wives (four and four).

symbolizing Faro's presence and protection, are covered with paintings and drawings.

778 794 532 On one of the walls, small lines representing the ancestors and a broken line representing the human person are drawn with millet mash; on another, engraved with a sharp point, is a schematic geometrical figure of the ancestral home; it is accompanied by the silhouettes of two hands (see Fig. 10, 1 and 2), the hands of the living, "crossed and reaching out to the world of the dead." The left hand, symbol [826] of disorder, incertitude, and the variations of human conscience, is placed below to the right of the other to recall man's obligation towards his right hand, symbol of order, righteousness, fidelity, and work (1). Thus arranged, the hands express complete submission of

1. In making this drawing the following words are repeated: "I place my right hand on the wall night and day," neben kinin bolo da koko la ǯu ni kle.

the living to the ancestors.

Farther away are drawn the divisions of the universe (Fig. 10, 3) with the help of a square divided into three compartments symbolizing from top to bottom: the sky and water, the air, the earth.

In the upper square to the left, a line represents Faro in all his power, sole master of sky, water, and life. A horizontal line recalls his domination over the world. The lines that follow are his children. The total indicates the feminine form of the spirit.

All individual or family sacrifices offered to Faro are performed over his sign which the officiator rubs with copper and crushed tomatoes in order "to thank the spirit who protects his dya, and to pray to the spirit to give his wife children."

The central rectangle is the domain of Téliko: air and wind. The small line which vertically bisects the square on the left represents the spirit attempting to penetrate into Faro's plan to vanquish him. His defeat is indicated by the fact that the major portion of the line is situated in Téliko's domain, since the latter violated only temporarily the boundaries of his adversary.

The lower rectangle outlines the earth, seat of the Soba spirits. The row of 22 short lines which covers it recalls the 22 elements of creation, "the 22 things indispensable to man in this world."

On another wall, fire is indicated by two whips: that of Faro, lightning, and that of Komo, the law. They also recall "the power

778 794 532 of the initiates' word" and are exposed to fire to increase this power (Fig. 10, 4). Beside them, /131/ a large red stain, dyoli ǰikin, painted in ochre, states that man is the sacrificer, that the cult has immolation as its basis. Of such a man it is said that: "he reckons with the proof of the blood (1)" (Fig. 10, 5).

1. Dyoli tamaše mine ba.

Above the bed which consists of a simple mat placed on the ground, three engraved lines symbolize the man and two four lines the two women who alternately share his bed (Fig. 10, 6).

778 794 532 413 In certain villages, the drawings are made by an instrument called ngwoni, used during the rituals of the year's "renewal" (2).

2. Particularly at Banankoroni.

The point of baobab wood, which is used for engraving, is as slim as a slat and fits on to a kind of racket made of sunzuŋ wood which holds a net of da fibers. The hide of a male goat, called soni wolo ni (literally, soul of the skin of sacrifice), and two handles of ngolobe wood (3) complete the assemblage. The net, made of sixteen cotton

3. Combretum michrantum.

threads dyed with red ochre, kolo, is called ngwoni kene ba (literally, great space of the ngwoni) and represents Faro.

778 794 532 Before being used, the instrument is washed with water which will be used later to cook the food for the family. Next, tomatoes are pressed on the net and the juice runs into the hide which forms a pocket; holding the point in the right hand and the handle in the left, one then makes the drawings on the wall of the česo. The seeds of the fruit remain in the pouch until the following year to serve as a testimony to the offering. Next, with a red hot knife the following lines are engraved on the object: four lines, representing Faro, and two 16 lines, multiples of four, the female symbol. After each cut, "a rag saturated with fresh water is placed on it to soothe the pain." The frame is saturated with kola nut extract and four dots, the womb of women, are also marked with a black stone, kolofin. An egg is then smashed on the object to "refresh the soul of the ensemble."

622 178 scars symbolizing the person (three and four) are made on it. At the moment the skin is buried under the seat, the following prayer is recited:

"I have sworn in your names by striking on the siriku of Yamba by (burying) the skin from the right and left sides of the forehead; the skin from the forehead (seven times)" (1).

1. Tena wolo fla kini ani numa yamba

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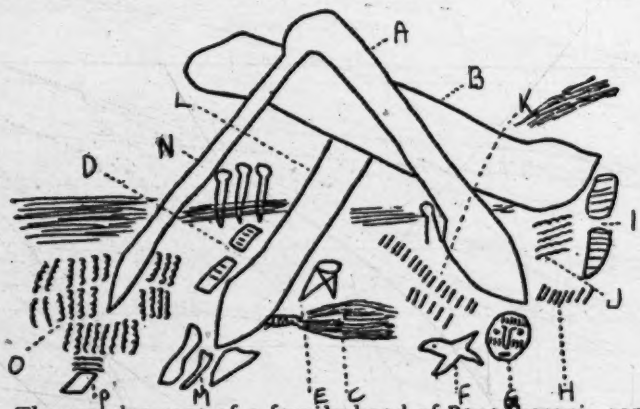

Fig. 11 — The wooden seat of a family head of Banankoroni, representing his joints. It is inserted into the ground in the courtyard above the bones of an albino, those of a child, and various symbolic objects. (Drawing by an informant.)

ka siriku nye di ka fo ani aw čua ye kena, tena wolo.

The prayer recalls here the acts of the fourth ancestor Yamba, who inaugurated the sacrifices of albinos to Faro, and his role as a chief beginning with this mythical period (see p. 46), a role which the present chief must fulfill with the same righteousness. The siriku is a small protective altar usually made from a hyena tail.

In (m) are placed the three principal bones of the albino; the two femurs and the right humerus, "so that the chief may have white

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religious and social powers in ancient societies, it is interesting to point out that the Komo altars represent a very definite three-way division: the first is used for the conservation of spiritual forces (souls) of the group; the second presides exclusively over agricultural rites; the third is concerned with keeping the spiritual principles of individuals who died violently and of crop seeds; it played an important role during the wars. This threefold division is comparable on many points to that observed by M. Dumezil in Indo-European societies.

from the first crops /149/ used as offerings, are placed next to the sanctuaries or in the home of the chief (1).

1. In the village of Soroba the sanctuary includes seven granaries: three for small millet, sanó; four for large millet, keninge. Seven is the number symbolic of the person, three for masculinity (small millet is male) and four for femininity (large millet is female).

C. The Mask

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The man who wears the mask during the ceremonies personifies the Komo. The head is sculptured in the shape of a human face or animal face. At Konodimini, it represents the panther; at Soungoba, a stork; at Banankoroni, an eagle; at Banoumbougoula, an elephant; at Ségoubougou, a vulture. The mask is usually decorated with elements borrowed from several animals. Thus, at Soroba, the skull and horns are those of a buffalo, but the jaw is that of a crocodile. It is, moreover, ornamented with the feathers of a wild duck (2).

2. An informant, who attended Komo ceremonies in a great number of villages, asserted he had never seen the same mask twice.

794 532 The head of the mask is usually made of bone (a human or hyena skull), or of wood painted white, black, and red. The mask, per se, is made in such a way as to frighten the future initiates. Just as the soul of a dead person, which requests offerings or threatens to drag his kin with it, is feared, so too is this fact which is in contact with the altar of souls (nimara boli) and which reflects the face of the ancestors. It also represents Faro: the mask is sometimes provided with a long beard symbolic of his hair, and lightly plastered with a layer of black earth taken from the river bank and impregnated with his power; it is sometimes smeared with the blood of a young girl who has died in the course of the ceremonies, in commemoration of the virgins annually offered to Faro in olden times.

Copper arrows (kun bye) are inserted into the skull and charms (kun kanana) are attached to them with the purpose of attacking the undesirables (noninitiates, women, or children) who approach the dance site.

"The eyes of the mask are large, so that the Komo may see and unveil everything; the nostrils are well opened for he must sniff everything, smell the good and bad of things. The mouth is twisted for the Komo does not talk; he only whistles and sings. The ears are vast so that he may hear everything, even that /150/ which each one says secretly in his heart. The chin of the mask is square, a sign of purity, decision, and clairvoyance." During the ceremonies, he silently opens his mouth. It is said that due to the presence of the altar of souls, nimara boli, "happiness penetrates him" (1). By singing, he redistributes this felicity to the audience and this is why he repeats the verses.

1. Here dun, literally, penetration of happiness.

794 532 784 841 As a rule, women, griot and noninitiates are taboo to the mask. To each of the elements composing it also belongs a particular taboo. Thus, the head of the mask must never touch menstrual blood. Any infraction would bring about "a visible change to the face" and the altars contained in the sac carried by the dancer would be without strength. For this reason, no member must participate in the ceremonies if his wife is in a menstrual period.

794 292 The costume worn by the dancer is held up by a sort of carcass (bry) made of ngolobe (1) wood used because of its flexibility, and is

1. Combretum micranthum.

enveloped with a light blanket for protection. Inside the bry are suspended various flutes (komo fle) which are blackened by the blood of sacrifices offered to "improve their sound" and which will be used in the course of the ceremonies. Along with these flutes is a little bag filled with spare spider webs. Any individual who goes under the [834] bry to dance must abstain from sexual relations for a specified period of time prior to the ceremony.

The costume (nya) which covers the carcass is made with the clothing of individuals killed by the Komo (2). Contrary to the bry, which

2. When a guilty member or a noninitiate is "killed" by the Komo, his clothing is offered to it.

has no active role but serves only to isolate the dancer inside the mask, the religious role of the costume is very important. It represents the "body and the valor of the ancestors." It is not the object of blood sacrifices, but is covered by a powder made of the bones of individuals killed by the Komo to which has been added kola nut juice. The 794 cloth is dyed with black earth taken from the river bank in exchange 292 for a small offering of copper, gold, or cereals. Drawings called 532 komo mani (literally, little people of the Komo) are made on the cloth to represent Faro on the one hand, recognizable by his long black hair, and on the other the eight ancestors who received the word. All the first agricultural implements of the Bambara are drawn with red ochre. The feathers of black, white, and red egrets are then sewn on the nya to hide /151/ the black earth, which is the spirit's abode. Two days before everything is taken out, these feathers are the object of offerings of kola nut juice, millet mash, and the blood of fowls.

794 292 784 The costume, like the head of the mask, must be seen neither by women nor by noninitiates. "Its color would change and it would become dull, making a purification necessary."

794 532 The body of the mask has two arms into which the dancer introduces his own. The arms terminate in a hook, koli (3), which is

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3. Koli means nail or spur in reference to a rooster and, by extension, hook.

impregnated with black earth from the river and made of copper, Faro's metal, soaked in the venom of a viper before the hook was formed. These hooks are also annually soaked in red venom mixed with pepper. All these preparations make them dangerous weapons used for different purposes during the ceremonies.

The right hook (kinin koli) is used to kill the guilty ones or the undesirables. A slight would brings about death which is then attributed to Faro. The left hook defends members of the society against the dangers which are present, even for them, in the actions and emanations of the right hook. It contains two shards of black pottery, Faro's taboo, which keep away and thus diminish the latter's power. During the dance the Komo, wishing to protect one of the members under its jurisdiction, waves the left arm over him to attenuate the strength of the right. During funerals a gesture of the left hook will indicate the deceased's membership in the society and will assure him protection in the hereafter.

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The taboo of the copper hooks is the same as Faro's concerning this metal. Just as no one would cross the Niger wearing an object or an ornament of copper, similarly no one would wear copper in attending the Komo ceremonies.

The wearing of the mask, which is much sought after by several initiates at each ceremony, is assigned to one of them by the chief. This role involves risks which are diminished by certain precautions such as abstention from sexual relations before the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony, the elders make the wearer drink millet beer until he is completely inebriated; then for a moment they apply to his chin and abdomen the nyama boli which he will carry in a bag during the ceremony. He also puts on a ritual headdress which sometimes has incorporated in it a particle of the one belonging to the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé. The mask is then adjusted on his head, the flute slipped between his teeth, while the chief assures him of his good faith and proves to him that he runs no danger.

/152/ D. Musical Instruments

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The emergence of the Komo is accompanied by rhythms played on drums, dyiri kolo (literally, bone, wood), made of hides stretched

794 chiefs, which they did. They interrupted the dances and refused to
713 recognize the Komo which was dissolved, leaving the chief alone.
539 But Garou, who had lied, died shortly after that.

The chief of Kankan carried away the altars and put them under the protection of the Komo chief of Koulikoro, and the members participated in the ceremonies of this locality. Moridje went to Nyamina and, in the same way as Garou, incited the members to engage in a kind of rivalry with the Komo of Koulikoro. In the course of a ceremony celebrated in this latter village, he called forth the Komo of Nyamina, using the authority attached to his father's name, and offerred a male goat to both groups. The two chiefs refused, arguing with reason that one victim could not satisfy two Komo. Moridje paid no attention and brought the two maskers face to face with the goat between them. A fight took place with the animal as a pawn, each masker using his magical powers to win it, and the members gathered behind their respective masks shouting: "the goat is ours." Later, the mask wearer also died prematurely.

794 To avoid the possibility that members will give their allegiance to two Komo, they are made to lick the mask once again, while the following prayer is recited: "If you lick the mask, may you not make the flãvlãña, may you not perpetrate a betrayal" (1). If, after swear-

1. Nye komo kun no, i kana seka flãvlãña kẹ, nye komo kun no, i kana seka dyãfa kẹ.

ing this oath, the party betrays it, he becomes "a rotten person" (matolilo) and loses the esteem and confidence of his companions.

194 As the young men grow with years and increase in knowledge, the
869 instruction they are given is increasingly comprehensive. The head
532 of the Komo, accompanied by men of his age grade, takes the postulant into the bush and questions him about his intentions and aims. Before indicating to him the group to which he is to be attached and introducing its members to him, he teaches him by drawing on the ground the combination of signs representing the arrangement in the universe of the Komo society, a combination which is usually reproduced before each ceremony and which permits the participants to recognize their place (see Fig. 12).

This drawing, called wolo ti, "sign of the generation," is composed of two long lines cutting each other at right angles and oriented

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according to the cardinal points. The point of juncture is placed in the center of a square called bara kene, "rhythm of space," the internal angles of which are armed with hooks. The two crossed lines are /157/ the symbol of the multiplication and extension of beings and things in the universe which is represented by the central square. The four angle hooks express the creation rotating upon itself (1). It is therefore,

1. See p. 20. We have here a special representation of the swastika whose branches are turned toward the center.

a schematic representation of the order and movement of the universe.

Along the extension of the diagonal lines outside the central square are drawn five signs which are each the symbol of a category of initiates or of a ritual object; these signs also indicate the place of the participants during the ceremonies.

On the eastern and western branches are placed the signs of the older initiates:

1. dyé, "union." Sign of the Komo Society in its entirety, the body of its members.

2. doniya, "knowledge." The point of the angle is "the point of knowledge" and its opening "the collective voice of the society." We are dealing here with the science which the initiates possess.

3. bako, "link." This closed sign expresses the ties which bind the initiates one to another and to the Komo, as well as the group spirit of which they must give proof.

4. sõni, "good will, consent." The point of departure of the stroke from the line indicates that the initiate is free to enter the society, to climb the steps of the successive grades indicated by the broken line, but not to leave it, and that he must have the will to follow the rules of the organization.

5. tyɛ̃, "truth." The members must be sincere. The two symmetrical hooks indicate that one must begin with truth and end with it.

6. tyɛ̃ ɲere, "evidence of truth." This drawing, testimony to the preceding, is sometimes attributed to strangers who come to attend the ceremony and recognize the conventional signs (2).

2. See p. 211.

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7. bẽni so, "house of agreement." Evidence of the sign 1, it represents a sickle, symbol of the house and of the union of the members. In serious cases, to stop a quarrel or to settle a difference, the Komo chief presents an ancient sickle and says: "It is the proof of the agreement, it is the evidence of the union" (1).

1. Beni so yeta do, dye šere do.

8. ǰigi so, "house of support." The dot symbolizes the komo so and the whole recalls the support which the chief offers the members. Orphans sit in the spot where this sign is drawn.

/158/ 9. so ba, "big house." The drawing represents "the egg of the world" and marks the spot where the oldest geomancer in the village stands alone.

10. komba, "big door." Sign and place of the person who performs the sacrifice, for the sacrifice "opens the doors" and puts man into contact with the invisible.

On the northern branch are placed the signs which concern the young initiates.

11. timidẽ, "circumcised." This refers to those circumcised in the next to the last age grade. The sign is that of the completed person (2).

2. See G. Dieterlen, "Les signes des Kéita du Mandé /Signs of the Kéita among the Mande/," l'Homme. Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie, de linguistique (in press).

12. timidẽ kle, "circumcised of the last age grade." The drawing shows the incomplete person.

13. tyi dẽ, "son of work." These are the sons of the kworẹ duga (3). The sign, drawn inverse to that of the person, expresses the /159/

3. See p. 220.

necessary disturbances and the pleasantries brought by these dignitaries to the Kworè and Komo ceremonies.

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14. soni dɛ̃, "son of the sacrifice." Drawn on the place for the sacrificer's son, the sign includes a horizontal line representing the knife, for the son may be called upon to replace his father in performing his duty during the ceremonies.

15. yeleka tigela, "the laughing man who cuts." This is the individual in charge of proclaiming the good or bad position of the victims which have been sacrificed.

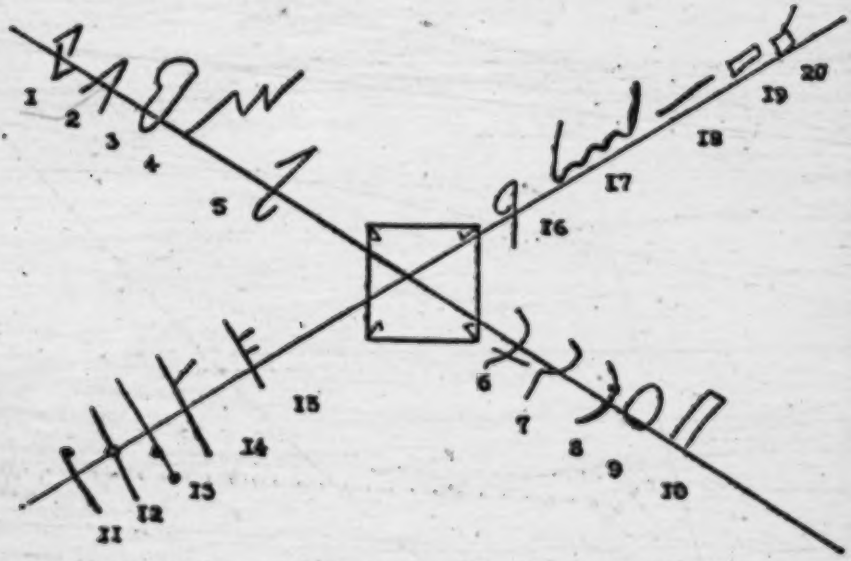

Fig. 12 — Drawing made on the ground by the chief of the Komo to mark, by their signs, the places of the participants during the ceremonies. This drawing, observed in the village of Dougoutiguibougou, is complete. When the branches forming an x are missing, the central square is always represented. (Drawing by an informant)

On the southern branch are placed the signs representing the blacksmiths; they relate to the institution of circumcision and to the functioning of the Komo of which these artisans are the dignitaries.

16. boffema, "honored person." Place of the aged blacksmiths.

17. wara da dyuru, "string from the mouth of the man armed with hooks." This is the small string of the flute, called "voice" of the Komo.

18. wara da, "mouth of the man armed with hooks." The flute of the Komo.

794 19. pembele. This sign represents both the society's pembele and
869 the board of the same name used for circumcision.
20. gosilãnde. The sign designates the primitive club and the small
532 mallet used in circumcising.

The ensemble of these figures, representing a summary of the universe in its arrangement and its movement, forms the scene upon which the actors in the ceremony take their places. The latter are in a way the living embodiment of these drawings as well as the movements which change the order of presentation and must be executed with special precautions. In effect, any change made in the arrangement of the actors in the scene is felt to have repercussions in the universal organization. This is why the movements of each one give rise to rituals of forgiveness and purification concerning the sign corresponding to him (1).

1. See below.

F. Ceremonies of the Komo

794 The ceremonies in which the mask participates take place several
796 times a year according to the decision of the members. Their purpose is to discuss the interests of the society, to make joint decisions assuring the prosperity of its members, to promote harvesting, and to commemorate the organization of the Komo.

Three principal ceremonies are celebrated: the first, called /160/ "anniversary of the Komo" (komo sanyelema), at the end of the dry season; the second after the harvest, for offering of the first produce, as the mask is never taken into the fields at the time of cultivation; the third during the cold season at the time of circumcision. They involve sacrifices offered in the cemetery in honor of the dead as well as divining rites. Occasional ceremonies may also take place inbetween upon the membership's decision; the mask is taken out for purifications. The neighboring societies are generally invited to
[574] attend the reunions and the drinking which follow (2).

2. The important Komo chiefs are thus consulted by strangers in the village, who sometimes travel considerable distances.

uncomplainingly the burns inflicted upon them with a torch and they whip themselves vigorously. The chief next teaches them the role of the Kworè spirits, the rituals celebrating them, and the symbolic value of the objects of the cult.

Some of the members are designated to take the role of kworę duga during the ceremonies. Masked and waving freshly cut branches in each hand, they mount a wooden horse, the kworęduga so (1). Thus

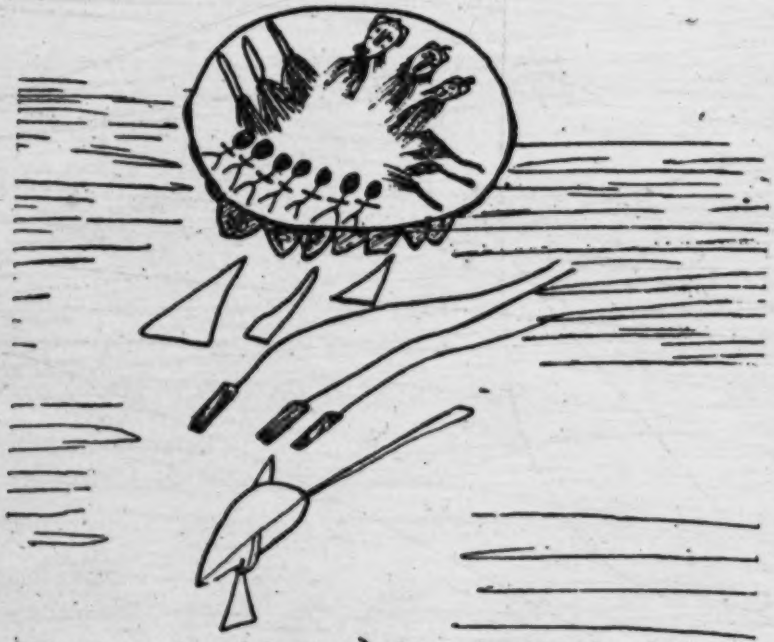

Fig. 13 —Stone altar of the Kworè of Banankoroni under which are buried three neolithic axes, three whips, the ritual iron axe, kongobwona. The drawing, made in the course of the annual ceremony, represents the first three of the eight ancestors who received the word, the members of the society, and the Kworè whips; the black spot is the "womb of Faro." (Drawing by an informant)

1. The kworę duga (literally, vulture of the Kworè), also called togoro koya, "jesters," are as their name indicates, jesters who have the right to joke about

194 instruction and initiation. Five years are thus necessary to reach the highest rank. Each promotion is paid for by the individual providing [782] two roosters whose throats are cut upon the altars at the end of the annual ceremony which takes place in the bush under a tree called the kalabana, following communally performed labor. After meal, a [526] fight called bari, organized under the direction of the chiefs, puts the young boys in opposite groups and gives them the opportunity to show their courage and their initiative.

194 The members' activity consists of collective work at the time of 476 the cultivation. The millet and the gifts in kind received in payment for the work are owned communally.

A. Material Objects of the Cult.

194 The society is the owner of ritual objects such as a mask and whips 778 which are usually placed in a hut, ndomo buku, at some distance 534 from the village.

The objects, numbering five, are rudimentary musical instruments. The wara, the clawed one, or diara, the lion, is a wooden bull-roarer approximately 35 centimeters in length, which is manipulated by means of a string a meter long. Sometimes the object is of iron and of smaller dimensions. The tori, toad, is a small box which gives off a nasal sound when it is scratched. The kono, bird, is made of two pieces of gourd bound together by spider webs. The wulu, dog, is a small calabash of about 10 centimeters in diameter, punctured by four holes. A string, threaded through its neck, allows it to be rotated like a rhombos. The jineble (literally, red spirit) is a buffalo horn pierced by three holes, /172/ obstructed by spider webs, into which one blows and which produce a loud, flute-like sound. One society usually owns several specimens of each of these instruments.

194 The mask, said to be the most ancient object, is of sculptured wood 778 representing a human face crowned by several vertical, rather long 532 horns (1). The whole is completely decorated with cowrie shells and

1. The masks most often carry eight horns, but this rule is not always respected.

red kise (2), grains which represent the blood from the offerings. The

2. Linociera sudarica.

794 778 532 high forehead, black and always smeared with karite butter, confers upon the face a beneficial power. The whole mask is regularly rubbed with ground charcoal powder and with the juice of the kola nut.

794 778 The whips of the mask (ndomo busa) are made of ñuana branches famous for their suppleness. They are made at the time of the annual ceremony and only renewed the following year. At the time of their manufacture, they are soaked in water, which the members of the society then drink "in order not to have to suffer from the blows which they will receive."

[824] Each member also possesses a long whip made of the branches of a bush, the ngere ni, (1) which is also called "tree of Faro" for it

1. Hibiscus pandoriformia.

grows in water, and which contains part of the beneficial power of the spirit. The whip is used to try out the children's courage. The one who cries or complains will carry this handicap with him through life; even after his circumcision he will be referred to as a coward.

B. Initiation

794 526 Each new grade is acquired in the course of the annual ceremony which takes place after the harvest. An elder entrusted with the sacrifices cuts the throats of the roosters offered by the postulants over the tree of the ndomo (Pl. V, a) and over the ritual objects placed at his feet, and then pours boiled millet as an offering. During this time the young people plow the ground where the contest, bari (2), is to take place; this fight will pit them against each other

2. To make oneself fall, the joust.

and give them the opportunity to show their courage and competitive spirit.

The chief designates the fighters two by two who are watched over /173/ by the dyolokotigi. In the contest, during which any use of legs or feet disqualifies the fighter, the one who makes his adversary fall three consecutive times is chosen to be initiated into a higher grade on the following night. After this contest, the losers must bring two additional roosters if they also wish to be initiated. Then a meal eaten in common brings together the members of the society and the postulants.

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Before the operation, the blacksmith washes the handle, an act which parallels /182/ the washing of the penis, and draws on the blade ritual designs either in charcoal or with boiled millet (1).

1. Some artisans have, once and for all, engraved the ritual designs on the blade.

The three figures ǰe mani saba (literally, three little male persons) represent the first three circumcised men (Gwonna, Gwondo, and Gwonkè) who belonged to the blacksmiths' families at the village of Gwondougou. Every descendant of these ancestors must be circumcised like them. In making the drawing the operator says:

"Gwonna, Gwondo, Gwonkè, you have discovered iron and you withstood the pain (of the first circumcision), you feel shame neither by night nor by day; our feet are placed in your footsteps; the iron did not shame you, let it not shame us; it is the will of Faro...attack, attack, attack" (these last three words are addressed to the knife)(2).

2. Gwonna, gwondo, gwonkè, aw ye neke damene, ka neke gale munyu, aw ma malo ǰu ani kle, an se daledo an se danola, neke maw malo a ka na an malo, faro hakili do, ǰu ǰu ǰu.

The four figures, muso mani nani (literally, four little female persons), are the first four excised women, the inventors of pottery, who were the wives of these blacksmith.

The bird is the tatugu koroni, the incarnation of the eight ancestors of the blacksmiths. It recalls that circumcision is painful, hard, hot, comparable to the effects of fire, and that it is necessary to labor and suffer in order to withstand the cutting knife. This is also what the artisan recalls when, as he operates the children, he sings several times over:

"The knife is hot; the timorous man cannot stand it. It is a purification" (3).

3. A ka gwã, ǰe ǰito tise ka muũu, saniyali do.

304 The foreskin, which is tied by a string (drawn at the center of the
532 blade) at the moment of the operation, is placed upon the pembele
413 (black rectangle) and the cutting knife is tapped with a small wooden mallet, gossilã (drawn at the tip of the knife). These three figures receive during operation the offering of the first spurt of blood from the circumcised boy.

The line, which crosses the blade along the middle, separates the bird and the ancestors who gave proof of courage from the instruments used for the circumcision. As a division it symbolizes first of all that each grade of circumcised boys must be considered apart from the others. This is its social meaning. But the delicacy of the line itself has a meaning which applies to the individual: each one must, in his own image, be morally /183/ simple, just, and sensitive. By conforming to the rule symbolically indicated by the design, the individual will become a member of the elite.

384 The date of the operation is fixed when Mousso Koroni's star, sigi
787 dolo (Sirius), rises in the evening at a certain point in the east (1).
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1. See note 1 p. 47. To determine the date, however, the ndomo society may be consulted, which sometimes postpones it to keep its members longer.

After the boys to be operated have been counted, each gets ready, and on the appointed day the mother washes her son's penis with water in which an iron axe or hoe has been soaked. Then she prepares a dish
[262] of rice, ye farina to "dish of man's bravery," which the child eats before he is led to the place of the operation, called yorola sakole "reserved place," located in the bush.

304 When all are gathered together the blacksmith-circumciser operates
326 upon each one in turn after he has made them sit down in a circle on the ground. Pulling and twisting the foreskin, he ties it with the string which he keeps taut by securing its extremity between his toes. He next places the member upon the pembele, rests the knife /on the foreskin/ and taps /it/ with the wooden mallet. In this way he cuts off the foreskin while saying the following words:

"Circumcised one, your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, the father of that one too, the ear (the genitals) of the ancestors of the latter have withstood (the pain); you, yourself, withstand it as

304 326 /184/ they did. Faro, Teliko, Soba! You who are a man, your number is three; three of the penis, three of the twins, designs of the penis, it is the tradition, withstand it; Faro!" (ter) /repeat three times/(1).

1. Bolokodɛ̌ i fa, i moke, o ta fa, o ta fa were, o ta fa klo masamaw ye munyu, i yere ka munyu u cǒko la, faro, teliko, soba, o ye ce ta saba ye, wulu wo, flani wo, kolo nyeke, lada do, i ka munyu; faro (ter).

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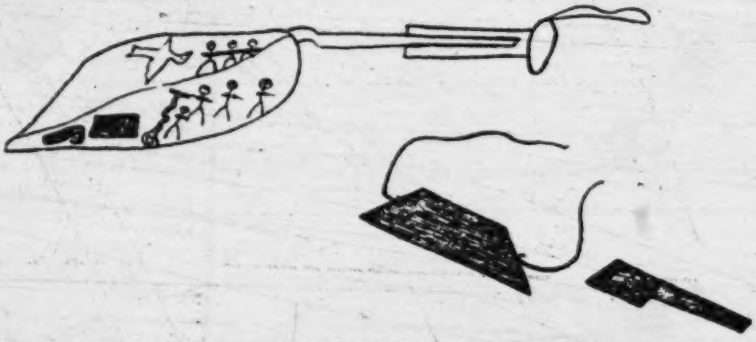

Fig. 15. — The circumcision knife decorated with ritual designs: three men and four women (representing the number seven); the bee eater symbolizing fire; the string; the small board; and the hammer used for the operation (these last two objects are reproduced on a larger scale to the right). (Drawing by an informant.)

304 326 831 After the removal, the operator makes scars upon the child's penis, called faro nyeke (literally, signs of Faro). Under the muscle wulu dyuru (literally, rope of the penis), a small hole is carefully made. Since the penis is considered a source of strength, the muscle which maintains it and erects it binds the circulation of the blood and helps man in all his acts. It is through this muscle that man transmits nerves to his children. A straight organ, firmly held in check, keeps the man and his descendants from numerous illnesses; the aim of this mutilation is to obtain complete and well formed foreskins and clitoris in the children of the party concerned. After the perforation, 304 326 843 the operator places in the orifice a little pepper and tomato juice while saying:

304 During the seclusion, they wear about their head a piece of white
[242 cloth, Faro's color, which has the same function as the cap of the
534] circumcised boy. They shake a gourd bolokode barani, filled with eight grains or small pebbles, whose sound keeps passers-by away. The leaps, which they perform over the fire made of clothes, gourds, and refuse that have been ignited, end the seclusion and rid them of their wanzo, which goes to settle in the altars of the ndomo.

It is said of a young girl who was well excised that she is well behaved and carries herself with dignity. On the contrary, it is said of a girl of light morals "that her hands were not washed clean" (1).

1. A bolo ma ko ka dye ya.

which means that she was improperly excised.

Funerals

761 The effect of death is to dissociate the elements composing the
764 person. The body becomes a corpse (su) from which the /189/ ni and
775 the dya escape to follow their particular destinies, while the tere is transformed into nyama, an active and dangerous force which wanders about the deceased. The funeral rites aim first to channel the deceased's spiritual elements which must be conserved in the interest of the deceased as well as that of the community. Moreover, through the care given to the body and to these elements, the memory of the dead person is piously kept up. The notion of a final resurrection, promised to all who have lived, inspires these preparations. The bones of the deceased, which are like the exuvia of his physical body, its solid and durable framework, join the exuvia of his soul which is kept in the altars of the Komo. Thus, at the end of time, the dead man "will rise and, to everyone's joy, join his family."

764 The funeral rites, which the Bambara have always celebrated, have evolved along with their beliefs. At the time when the cult of the balanza was flourishing, the dead bodies were hung from trees until they rotted, their bones picked up and kept by their descendants. The ancestors of the Gwonna then carved pieces of sunzun wood
● [532] called mani (literally, little person) in the image of the dead. The length of the wood was proportionate to the length of the body; the head, arms, legs, and genitals were carefully reproduced. The mani

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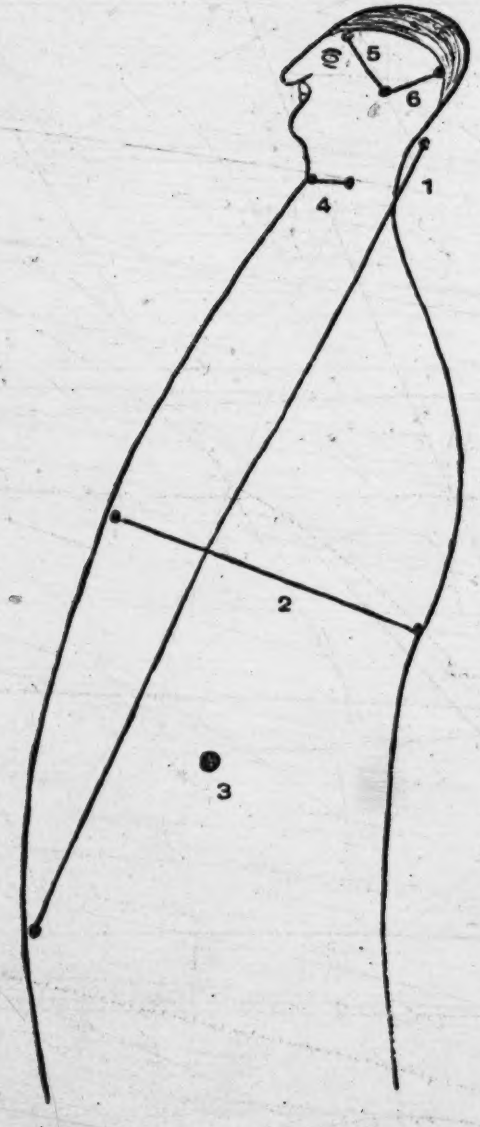

Fig. 16 — Drawing made with millet mash by the chief of the Komo on a cadaver. (Drawing by an informant.)

766 After the burial,[1] a drawing is made on the sanctuary with millet
531 mash made of grain from Faro's field; this drawing represents the dead man and the mutilations inflicted upon him. The seven attending elders close their eyes as a sign of respect in order not to "register a drawing made for Faro." In fact, its aim is to obtain the spirit's pity and to ask him to include the dead among the count he keeps of his
[769] subjects. It is also in front of this drawing that the family will come to make an offering and mourn every week.

II. Rituals of the Refuse

364 The debris, sweepings, and refuse collected in the homes, court-
778 yards, public squares, and crossroads all contain forces which men have communicated to them.

The rituals, of which these are the objects and which vary according to their origin, have as their aim the offering of these forces to Faro who returns them to men purified and regenerated in the form of rainwater with which he irrigates the fields and in the form of ponds and wells. They are thus redistributed and used again for the benefit of the community.

The refuse at the crossroads, called dangu kalaw, stalks or straw of the dangu, contains the force, nyama, of all the beings that have trampled it.

/202/ The refuse from the homes contains the wanzo of the uncircumcised, the nyama which the inhabitants have to bear for having killed animals or insects and for having received insults, and their good or bad tere. These forces, called wanzo dla (literally, to arrange the wanzo) (1) or nyama dla, constantly come to the aid of all the

1. This term is applied to them particularly in houses where there are many children.

members of the family; they improve the wanzo of the uncircumcised, facilitate the women's childbirth, and renew the vigor of the old men. A small altar, konye, kept in the room reserved for the head of the family, is dedicated to them.

After the coming out of the Komo, the sweepings gathered on the spot where the dances take place contain the forces of the members.

1 [Of a drowned person — Analyst]

796 all is returned to him. He then goes to the river or to the edge of
783 Faro's pond, where he drinks a little water as a purification for the year to come.

2. On the day chosen for the family ceremony, the ngoni is solemnly removed from the room where it is usually kept hidden from view, and is presented to the family assembled before the door.

The rhythm called kalafoli is beaten out on the frame; the effect of this is to return the soul (ni) of the participants to the river or well. Then another rhythm, representing Faro, is played on the net to call in the renewed soul which has been returned by the spirit. Everyone opens his mouth and inhales the new, beneficial emanations coming over the family. When the rhythm ceases they all shut their mouths and return home without speaking. At the entrance door the children are given little strokes on the back with a little rope, sebe dyuru /208/ "to receive and withstand all that the new year will bring."

The instrument is then replaced in the home while all the participants shut their eyes in order not to see it. The owner goes into a trance, a fact which shows that Faro himself carried the instrument to the place where it will remain during the year. The man walks out backwards from the room where he has placed it and is carried into his česo, where he receives special care intended to return him to his normal state, which includes a purification performed on his individual altar, čuafebyěni (1).

1. See p. 175.

3. The collective ceremonies for the renewal of the person are first performed on the stone fara ba of the village.

The "signs of creation" (bolo ti doniya), engraved with a red-hot iron on a gourd as a request to the ancestors for their support, are presented to the participants. Next, the stone is removed and the objects covered by it are checked, the group thus assuring itself that none has been displaced during the year. Then they proceed to the
796 reconstruction of the ritual drawings. The operator first draws the
783 torches representing the fire used in olden times by the ancestors to
532 defend themselves against attacks and dangers from the outside while they were building the village. The following prayer is recited:

"You, torch of fire, I have prepared you in the mountain (from which our ancestors came), you who keep the souls of the village, protect us from those who wish us harm, fire" (ter) (2).

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2. E mõ ñõ tasuma, ñe e ɲu kulu la kẹ dla,
dugu nimara ba ke, i kã kla kelenyõ na,
tasuma (ter).

Then he draws, as on the ancestors' caps, a black dot which represents the womb of women as well as Faro. The latter will help men by giving them water, for without his help "none, not even the Kworè, have the rain necessary for agriculture.

Three small figures represent the three responsible chiefs of the Kworè who are subjected to the fire rites and who withstand with courage for the common welfare all the sufferings and burns. The other members are represented by four silhouettes to indicate their inferior position by a feminine number. The entire grouping of personages and torches converges on the black dot to show that "the men by their feet and the torches by their fire throw back their nyama toward him."

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When the drawings are finished, all the participants in turn place their little finger and then their tongue on them to abandon the nyama of the year and to receive new forces. The women use the same gestures as the men but repeat them four times. Each person then receives, respectively, three /209/ or four lashes of the whip on his back so as to integrate properly within him these new elements (3).

3. The little finger acts upon the nyama
of the body, and the tongue upon the nyama
of words.

The children, led by their mothers, are the objects of similar attentions. The boys press their toes upon the stone; the little girls present their genitals to it to prove their femininity. All are then seated in turn on the stone so that the old nyama leaves them through the anus. Then, they are lifted up above it by their parents and "are shaken in all directions to settle properly the newly received nyama in them." The mothers pass their hands over the fact of their children and then over their own, a gesture which binds them to their offspring for the year to come.

The assembly goes to the Kworè stone where the cardinal points are renewed by brandishing lighted torches to the west, north, south, and then east. Each person apologizes for the faults committed during

191 534 the goatskin thongs (ngoni dyuru, literally, ropes of the ngoni). At the end of the stalk, ngoni ku, is affixed an iron percussion plate (boso) decorated with rings of the same metal (nyège nyegele) which are the "earrings of the spirits." These rings are said to be "multicolored' for the sound they emit is blurred and confused.

[532]

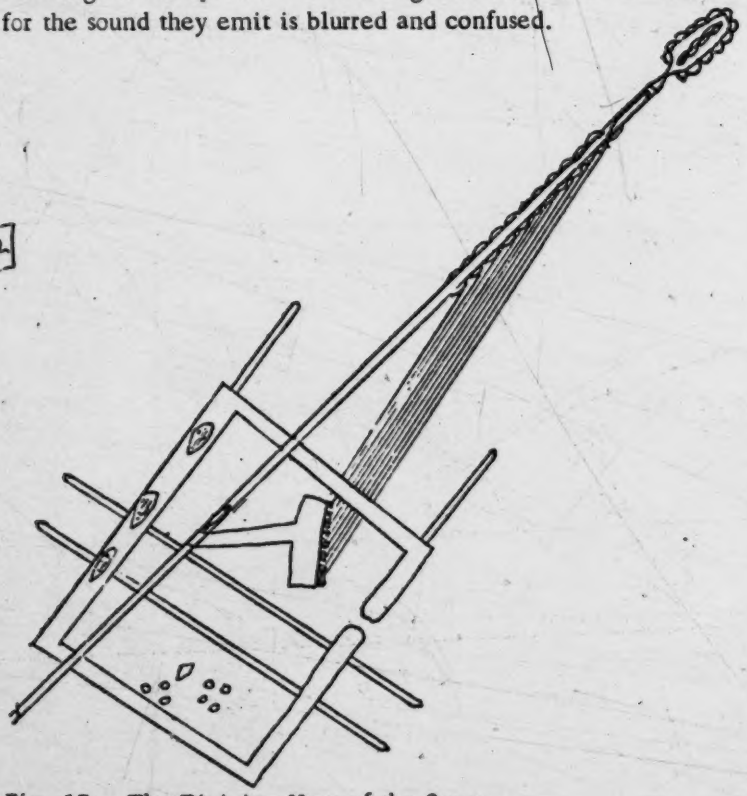

Fig. 17 —The Divining Harp of the Soma.
The instrument represents the face of the ancestor Koumabana who received "the word," and his tomb; on another level, it symbolizes also the face of the diviner and his tomb. (Drawing by an informant.)

When the percussion plate is placed on the handle, "it increases the sounds and filters them in the air, which pleases the spirits and calls them to the diviner whom they assist during his work." If the instrument /222/ is used without the percussion plate, that is to say, for a secular purpose, the spirits are not alerted by the playing of the music.

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534 The skin, stretched on the box by means of goatskin thongs, is soaked in water over which the name of the spirit Téliko has been pronounced forty-nine times. The supporting strings are made of twisted shreds of shrouds picked up in a cemetery. The musical strings are made of goatskin, numbering eight, /223/ symbol of the word (1),

1. The harp of the Soma differs from that of the griot which usually has even strings.

and are named as follows, beginning with the shortest: kumabana, fa dɛ̃ (son of the father), fa (father), fa koroke (elder brother of the father), fa dogone (younger brother of the father), ba (mother), modɛ̃ (grandson), fa so (house of the father).

Tied to a bridge, ɲiri ni (literally, teeth of the ngoni), which represents the mouth and teeth of Koumabana, they are the ancestor's words. On another level, they are also the home and the family of the spirit Téliko.

Of a relatively equal length in different harps, they give eight different notes; the intervals are called dyuru fara dye (2).

2. On some instruments we have observed, the first and the eighth string gave the same note at an interval of an octave. It may be predicted that a thorough study of Bambara music would bring to light a system of correspondences between the disposition of musical sounds and that of the world. M. Griaule, in his research on the Dogon harp, has already discovered a relationship between the notes, the numbers, and the universe.

[532] On the right side of the box the three first ancestors of the Bambara are sometimes drawn; Koumabana and the two elders who died after him. They may be recognized by the hair with which their faces are covered, just as those of the ancestors to whom the razor was unknown (3).

3. This detail has been observed on ancient instruments in the region of Koutiala.

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Plate 4

Fig. 7. Penperenni, small dancers in costume.

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Fig. 8. N'Tomo mask decorated with cowries.

[End Plate 4]

764 left of each chamber's entrance and was left to go out by itself. The body was placed in the middle of the chamber, the feet to the north and the head to the south. At the time of a new burial, all the long bones were gathered in one corner of the chamber and all the skulls in another, for the number of deceased was verified by these. Finally in the Kokum region hundreds of tumuli cover vaults consisting of a [346] heart-shaped chamber cut in the laterite and preceded by a vestibule to the west and by steps cut into the rock which lead to the open air. The outside and inside doors are closed by a slab of laterite. The outside door is hidden under the tumulus, with three equally-spaced stones marking the location. The skulls are arranged in a dome and separated from the long bones. Lastly, the tomb of the village's founding ancestor is found in the center of the village, to the north of the old fortified court of the chiefs' house.

III. Art

517 The Bambara conception of art is very different from the occidental idea of art for art's sake. Every object that we find beautiful has a precise social, religious, or technical significance for the Bambara: "The art of the Blacks is purposeful ... it is gratuitous projection in a material of ideas and knowledge which bring the user or spectator nothing other than themselves. Doubtless crude in the first stages, often the product of superficial knowledge or even of calculated errors, the esthetic sense of the Blacks is clarified and affirmed as they learn and as they pass from a 'light knowledge' to a knowledge of the great secrets. It seems impossible to an educated man that he could make an abstraction of his knowledge to judge a dance or to become enthusiastic over the playing of a clever harpist. What we call beauty is for the Black the adequacy of the object to represent that for which it is created." (1)

1. M. Griaule, "L'art nègre" [Negro Art], Présence africaine.

532 The masks conceal the person and transform the human being into a supernatural being. They are the privileged instrument of the [769] nyama, the first [104] model having been carved to fix the vital force of the first dead ancestor in a wooden figure. "The society of

● 532 the masks is an entire world, and when it sets itself in motion in the public place, it dances the movement of the world, it dances the system of the world." (1)

1. Ibid., "Dieu d'eau" [God of Water].

A. Statuary

Sculpture is man's work, done by the blacksmiths. It is of religious inspiration.

There are three centers of fabrication, whose productions differ in their form. These are the regions of Bamako, Bougouni (a veritable land of blacksmiths), and Kinian, of which the latter covers part of the Sikasso, Koutiala, and Ségou districts. (2)

2. Passim, Lem, "Sculptures soudanaises" [Sudanese Sculptures], Arts et métiers graphiques, Paris, 1948.

545 They make female statuettes, fertility statuettes, marionettes used for theatrical representations given by the young people, masks for the different societies, and, in particular, a whole series of stylized antelopes, special symbols of the tchi wara dancers.

532 171 "Like the Chinese sculptor of the Han period, the Bambara sees and fixes forms in terms of profiles. He practices openwork carving, cutting silhouettes which appear against the light as hieroglyphs with fixed and suggestive outlines. Giving interpretations to signs and forms borrowed from familiar animals, the Bambara combine and associate them to create figures emblematic of the tribe or clan, figures of recognition. This symbolic zoomorphism, the basis of heraldry, is that of the peoples of the great Asiatic steppe, that of the peoples of Mesopotamia and of Asia Minor; it was, in part, that of the Egyptians of the age of the Pharaohs who achieved in the valley of the Nile, predestined for this by its situation and its resources, the synthesis of a double culture." "Thus it is that the sculptor, in order to express his vision, often has recourse to the ideogram of geometric character, upon which is founded the conceptual character of the peoples of the steppe. (3)

3. Passim, F.H. Lem, Variété et unité des

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traditions plastiques de l'Afrique noire
[Variety and Unity of the Plastic Art Traditions of Black Africa].

532 A great variety of wood (4) is available to the sculptor, who

4. Passim, H. Lavachery, "L'art noir d'Afrique et son destin" [Negro Art of Africa and its Destiny], Présence africaine.

chiefly uses fine-grained species whose fibers are not very sensitive, and who avoids woods that are too hard and too dense. The artist [412] works with green wood, generally with an adze, or chip-axe, which probably is derived from the hoe. This instrument serves for rough chipping the mass and for establishing the secondary volumes; it gives the statue a singular "faceted" aspect. The work is completed [412] by means of a knife and gouges. A skillful technique makes it possible to give the wood a patina; it is blackened by burying the pieces in certain types of mud, by being immersed in palm oil, and daubed with lampblack. The wood is reddened by applying plasters made by grinding barks and making pastes from them. The objects so treated are [105] lengthily polished with skins and take on the sombre, brilliant aspect of old bronzes. The patina of the pieces is an important element of their beauty.

The art observes stylistic conventions, such as the deformation of normal appearances. In the structure of the mass, convention regulates the proportion of the parts, of the solid portions and the hollows; it regulates the development of the secondary volumes and of the surfaces of the different planes, their extent and their lines of contact. In its volume, the statuary obeys an almost immutable canon: to a cylindrical trunk is attached a head that is enormous in proportion to the other members, which are confined to narrow limits; the lower members are much shorter than in nature. The oversized head is a convention related to ancestor worship. The head is sculpted in concave style, and the entire figure is subordinated to a marked geometrization.

321 The blacksmiths also work gold by using the "lost wax"
531 method, or by hammering, embossing anf fixing thin leaves of gold,

778 kola nuts required in every sacrifice. All the people of the village
782 rejoice at the annual sacrifice. From the goat hut, where hangs the goatskin that serves as its tabernacle (1), the fetish is carried in pro-

[346]

1. The Bambara, whose huts are usually very clean, put their gods away in dark, filthy corners. The temples are small and have such low doors that it is often necessary to lie prone in order to enter.

cession to the place of sacrifice, a large tree that casts a little shade inside the village. During the procession the initiates shout sacred hymns at the tops of their voices, drums and xylophones beat and rumble, and all the circumcised stop when it passes /144/ and reverently bare their heads. The women and the uncircumcised kneel and bow their heads respectfully at the passing of the idol, which is hidden from profane view by a dirty cloth covering.

778 The boli of the second group are legion, and it is very difficult to know all of them. The main two are the Tji wara and the Douga.

A Tji wara seldom gives evidence of its power. Although it may kill its owner or anyone who happens to separate the male from the female in the course of the sacred dance, a Negro is seldom heard to blame it for the death of one of his family. This fetish is made of two forked sticks, one male and the other female, on which sacrifices are made. It may be seen hanging in the entry hut of its master, along with its cloak of false-cedar bark and its mask which are used in the sacred dance.

778 The mask of the Tji wara is tastefully made; in fact, it is the
●532 best Bambara sculpture I have seen. It is carved of the wood of the dondol (Bombax cornui) and seems intended to represent a goat or a deer. The male often has curved horns and sometimes measures almost a meter in height. The female is smaller, its horns are straight, rings hang from its nose and ears and, no doubt because a goddess could not be sterile, it carries its child on its back. (1) During the

T18
•532

1. It is easy to obtain a mask of the tji wara. Many colonials bring them back from the Sudan, but they are mistaken in speaking of it as a "Sudanese fetish." This mask and all the other masks, including the twins' doll, are not "fetishes" at all. They externalize for the Negroes their idea of the genie -- sétané -- which animates the object to which they sacrifice. /Placement of this footnote is editor's emendation, the original gives it on following page 153/.

During the
sacred dance the Negroes, decked out in mask and cloak, are bent double and constantly in motion. From time to time they bellow into a bull's horn. Since they cannot stand straight without failing in respect for the idol, they stretch out on the ground or crouch on all fours when they are tired and weary.

[516]

T18
T82 At the time of the arrival of the bani-n-kono (storks), a little before the rainy season, a sacrifice of dogs, goats, and hens is offered to the Tji wara. This fetish is especially venerated by youths; they ask it for strength, health, and earnestness in work. Thus, when young people get together to cut shrubs and make a new field in the midst of the bush or to pull out weeds in the winter, a goat is sacrificed; and they work to the sound of the drum and the tji wara bellowing into his horn. Upon their return from the field, the workers are given millet beer; then the sacred dance begins in the public square /145/ and continues far into the night, to the great delight of the women and children.

T18 The douga consists of a fairly large number of bulls' horns enclosed in a goatskin. It is hung in the entry hut, and it is there its altar is set; this altar is a square column of earth attached to one of the corners of the room. It often measures a meter in height; the